(2002-03 to 2004-05), 20 Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) were set up in the North Eastern Region (NER), besides the 16 KVKs existing earlier.

(b) The Government has approved the setting up of KVKs in all 77 rural districts of NER (as per India 2002), including the remaining 41 districts during Tenth Five Year Plan.

(c) Site Selection Committees have been constituted to examine the logistics for setting up of new KVKs in NER.

Garlic Production

†4657. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are importing garlic inspite of a good yield of garlic in the country;

(b) if so, the gap between production and consumption of garlic in the country; and

(c) the steps being taken by Government for increasing the yield of garlic?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) Government does not import Garlic. A demand of 5.79 lakh tonnes exists for garlic crop against production of 6.19 lakh tonnes (2004-05) in our country.

(c) Government is implementing a Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Macro-Management in Agriculture-Supplamentation/Complementation States' Effort through Work Plan" under which promotion of production of garlic also included in the programme of Integrated Development of Vegetables.

Involving markfed as broker between farmer and CCI

4658. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state.

(a) whether Government would increase minimum support price of cotton from Rs. 1760 per quintal to Rs. 2500 and groundnut from Rs. 1,500 to Rs. 2,000 to strengthen domestic industries;

(b) if not, the reasons therefor,

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) whether Government would assure of paying the price for cotton growers in advance through Mark-fed, which could recover the same amount from the Cotton Corporation of India, through an agreement between farmers, Cotton Corporation of India and Mark-fed, to solve the present crisis of hardships of cotton growers in getting their price amount from Cotton Corporation of India after more than two months; which is leading to their unbearable indebtedness under exploiting private money lenders; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) The main objective of price policy for agricultural produce is to ensure remunerative prices to the growers for their produce. The Government decides on the Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) for various agricultural commodities, taking into account the recommendations of Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP), the views of State Government and concerned Central Ministries as well as such other relevant factors, which in the opinion of the Government, are important for fixation fo MSPs. Based on these factors, the Government announced MSPs of Kharif crops of 2005-06 season on 20th April, 2005.

Since MSPs do not necessarily exceeds the weighted average C2 cost (actual expenses incurred in cash and kind, rent for leased-in land and imputed value of wages of family labour, rent for owned land and interest ort fixed capital) in respect of all crops/States, the price policy seeks to ensure that the A2+FL cost (actual expenses in cash and kind incurred in production + rent paid for leased-in land + imputed value of family labour) is covered by MSP in high cost/less endowed States. The weighted average A2+FL?cost of production works out to Rs. 1549 per quintal. Thus the MSP of Rs. 1760 per quintal fixed for 2005-06 for F-414/H-777/J-34 cotton provides adequate margin over the A2+FL cost of production.

Similarly, in case of groundnut the MSP of Rs. 1520 per quintal provides adequate margin over the weighted average A2+FL cost of Rs. 1178 per quintal. In fact, the SP of Rs. 1520 announced for 2005-06 covers the weighted average C2 cost of Rs. 1509 per quintal.

(c) and (d) The qualify of kapas *(i.e.* fibre characteristics and grades) brought to the market yard is assessed by the buyers, including Cotton Corporation of India (CCI), in the market yards in the presence of representatives of Market Committee. After fixing of the price, kapa§ is weighed and bills prepared and only then the value of cotton in determined.

Thus, it is not possible to pay the price to the cotton growers in advance through MARK-FED.

CCI releases payments directly to farmers or to the commission agents within a period of 7 to 10 days. Some delay may occur due to non-receipt of bills from commission agents or delay in weighment in the current cotton season due to unprecedented and massive purchases under MSP operations but efforts have been made to release payments as quickly as possible.

Foodgrain Production

4659. SHRI R. KAMARAJ: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the foodgrain production to the year 2004-05 is estimated as 210.44 million tonnes against 213.46 million tonnes last year

(b) if so, the reason for the shortfall;

(c) Whether it is also a fact that Government have assessed the rabi prospects and discussed the strategies and plans for the coming kharif season including the input situation and budget position; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) Yes Sir, The foodgrain production in 2004-05 is estimated at 210.44 million tonnes against 213.46 million tonnes last years. The reason of the decline is inadequate rainfall received during monsoon 2004. As compared to 2003, the southwest monsoon in
2004 was erratic with prolonged weak/break monsoon conditions prevailing during late June, most of July, late August and early September over different parts of the country. For the country as a whole, the seasonal rainfall from 1st June to 30th September was 87% of its Long Period Average (LPA). As a consequence the kharif foodgrain production in 2004-05 declined and is estimated at 104.08 million tonnes which is 12.8 million tonnes or 10.95% less than the corresponding Kharif production in 2003-04. However, the rabi production in 2004-05JS estimated at 106.36 million tonnes which is 9.78 million tonnes or 10.13% more than the corresponding production figure in 2003-04.

(c) and (d) The National Conference on Agriculture for Kharif Campaign 2005was held oh 22nd and 23rd March 2005 at New Delhi to assess the